

**SITE SURVEY SUMMARY SHEET
FOR
DEAP-FUDS SITE NO. C03VA020200
PLUM TREE ISLAND RANGE, POQUOSON, VIRGINIA**

SITE NAME: Plum Tree Island Range

LOCATION: Poquoson, Virginia

SITE HISTORY: The site has been used as a range for aerial bombardment and gunnery practice from 1917 to the late 1950's. Decontamination of the site was conducted in 1959; however, much of the ordnance, located beneath the marshy surface of the island could not be recovered. An individual trespassing on the island was killed and another wounded in the late 1980's when a bomb exploded while being handled, according to interviews from Fish & Wildlife Service personnel. Currently, the site is owned by the Department of Interior as a wildlife refuge; however, the Department of Defense reserves the right to jettison fuel and/or fuel pods over the island in emergency situations.

SITE VISIT: A site visit was conducted on 10 September by P. Bowen and D. Horton of the Norfolk District Corps of Engineers. Gary Andree of the Fish and Wildlife service guided the visit. The island is over 3,000 acres in size and covered with marsh grass and intermittent small circular ponds created by bomb impacts. The south end of the island, containing the majority of impacts, is eroding at an estimated five feet per year with ordnance being exposed in the tidal flats during low tide. Structures on the island include three small concrete observation bunkers, approximately 10'x12' in size, one large concrete observation bunker (12'x20') and three metal observation towers. Two of the observation towers have been taken down with explosives and the matrix of steel beams remain. A third observation tower, approximately 75 feet tall is still standing and represents a falling hazard. Tourists coming to the island by boat are frequently seen climbing the tower. A telephone conversation with Tony Leger, (804)721-2412, who manages the island for the Fish and Wildlife Service, indicates the Department of Interior would be interested in debris and ordnance removal. However, he qualified his statement saying there was concern for the amount of environmental damage this remediation would create. He further stated, should remediation become possible, the Fish and Wildlife Service should be involved in the planning phase of the project.

PROJECT CONDITION: An OEW project is proposed. A risk assessment code of IV was determined. A BD/OR project is recommended for the observation towers. However, the concrete bunkers do not appear to constitute a hazard and no action on these structures is recommended.

AVAILABLE STUDIES AND REPORTS: None provided.

PA POC: Paul R. Bowen, (804) 441-7669, is the District POC.

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**DEFENSE ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION PROGRAM
FOR FORMERLY USED SITES
FINDINGS AND DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY
PLUM TREE ISLAND RANGE
POQUOSON, VIRGINIA
Site No. CO3VA020200**

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The United States acquired 3,275.60 acres, in fee, for use as an Army aviation experimental station and later used as an Air Force bombing and gunnery range. The acquisition took place between 1917 and 1920. The site is located on the eastern side of the City of Poquoson, Virginia.
2. The site was an open area that was fenced in and the property contained a cargo pier and other structures not shown in the records.
3. Disposal took place in 1972 by transfer to the Department of the Interior. The range was decontaminated in 1959, however, due to its marshy nature, certification of the Decon could not be done. In the disposal, the Air Force reserved the right to use the southern end of the site for an emergency jettison area. As discussed with Mr. J. McCauley of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on May 9, 1991, the Air Force did jettison a fuel pod on the site in 1990 and a cleanup procedure was accomplished. A tower was left in place which creates a hazard and some bunkers have been left in place. Also, some ordnance has surfaced.

DETERMINATION

Based on the foregoing findings of fact, the site has been determined to have been formerly used by DoD. It is therefore eligible for the Defense Environmental Restoration Program-Formerly Used Defense Sites established under 10 USC 2701, et seq.

2 Oct 92
Date

RECOMMENDED

R C Johns
R. C. JOHNS
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
Commanding

12 FEB 93
Date

APPROVED

Paul Y. Chinen
PAUL Y. CHINEN
Brigadier General, USA
Commanding

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**PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET
FOR
DERP-FUDS SITE NO. CO3VA020201
PLUM TREE ISLAND RANGE, POQUOSON, VIRGINIA**

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The site is a marsh covered island approximately 3,275 acres in size used as a bombing and gunnery range from 1917 to the late 1960's. The south end of the island where most of the ordnance is located is eroding rapidly, exposing numerous bombs in the sand flats at low tide.

PROJECT ELIGIBILITY: The ordnance is definitely of DoD origin as a result of aerial bombardment and gunnery practice.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS: The site is now a wildlife preserve owned by the Department of Interior and managed by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS: A field investigation should be conducted for the location and removal of ordnance.

OEW RAC FORM: Attached.

PA POC: Paul R. Bowen, (804) 441-7669, is the District POC.

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